

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 28

An admiral for CIA

Naming of Admiral Stansfield Turner to head the Central Intelligence Agency at a time when almost everyone wants to get firm control of the agency looks a bit like setting the fox to guard the chicken coop.

But virtually the whole justification for the size of the Pentagon budget, for the development of new weapons systems and for the exploitation of a large fraction of our scientific and technical community depends on the appraisal of Soviet military effort. And now Admiral Turner, a product of the Pentagon, is being asked to oversee the gathering of intelligence data that will be used in deciding priorities in budgeting, in balancing foreign and domestic policy and in determining the whole tenor of our government. It is a classic conflict-of-interest situation.

Furthermore, he is one more representative of that highly specialized group of persons which seems permanently clustered at the center of governmental power, changing little with shifts in administrations. It is a group that could have little sympathy for the simple and straightforward approach that appears to characterize the new President. Adding Turner to that group may increase the possibility though it certainly does not guarantee it that the Carter Administration will be dominated by the familiar themes of establishment politics.

But there are other qualities to consider in the appointment. Admiral Turner is widely acknowledged to be intelligent and tough-minded. His re-

cent article on Soviet versus US naval strength shows a man able to discuss a complex issue in lucid terms that reflect a totally nondoctrinaire attitude, unfettered by a devil-theory of the world. His educational background is unusual for a naval officer, including a year as a Rhodes scholar during which he studied economics, politics and philosophy at Oxford.

At the same time, he comes from a tradition rooted in obedience. Turner's contacts with Herman Wouk, author of "The Caine Mutiny" suggest he appreciates the dangers as well as the advantages here, but he is part of the system, nevertheless. Handled properly, that sense of discipline could be exactly right for dealing with the roguish tendencies in the CIA.

One has to assume President Carter is serious about wanting a more open foreign policy, one that will not tolerate the covert operations of the CIA's past. Given orders to bar covert interference by the CIA in other countries' affairs, an Admiral Turner could be expected to do more than simply carry them out. He could also be expected to have some sophisticated ideas about how to root out evasions by overzealous subordinates.

The Turner appointment, for all its pitfalls, has interesting potential. The real test of its success will depend on the ways President Carter uses that potential for his broad aims in foreign policy. That may require some close monitoring but Jimmy Carter acts like a man who keeps both eyes open.